ENGAGE: a blueprint for incorporating social skills training into daily academic instruction.(Examine the Demands of Curriculum and Instruction, Note Essential Social Skills, Go Forward and Teach, Actively Monitor, Gauge Progress, Exchange Reflections)(Report).

By: Naomi A. Schoenfeld, Robert B. Rutherford Jr., Robert A. Gable, and Marcia L. Rock

Schoenfeld, N.A., Rutherford, R.B., Gable, R.A., & Rock, M.L. (2008). ENGAGE: A blueprint for incorporating social skills training into daily academic instruction. Preventing School Failure, 52 (3), 17-27.

Abstract:

Student success in school depends, in part, on adequate social-interpersonal skills. Yet, in a time when all students are expected to reach specified academic goals, school personnel are hard-pressed to find ways to address the social-interpersonal behavior needs of their students. In this article, the authors discuss practical ways for teachers to infuse social skills into academic instruction. The authors begin with a vignette to establish a rationale for merging academic and social skills instruction. Next, the authors briefly review the social skills research, highlight several studies, encapsulate the common overlapping assumptions, and describe the steps required to deliver quality social skills instruction. The authors describe the ENGAGE blueprint as a practical way to incorporate social skills into daily academic instruction. Last, the authors revisit the vignette to illustrate classroom application of the ENGAGE blueprint.

Keywords: classroom management, curriculum, instruction, problem behavior, social skills training, students with disabilities

Article:

The first-period bell rings and a stream of sixth graders piles noisily into Mrs. Thomas's classroom. Watching as the students fling their backpacks on the floor and gather around the lab tables, Mrs. Thomas wonders how she will manage to get their attention--let alone teach them anything about biology.

After 10 min and three rounds of shushing, about two thirds of her 26 students are trying to pay attention to her instructions for completing the lab assignment. But at one table Artemius is making faces, and his group has launched into a chorus of protests at having to share the table with him. At another table, petri dishes topple over as Susan grabs for materials and argues with those around her, who are telling her to stop. At the back table, Raulito harasses a group member who has raised his hand to ask a question. Seated near the windows, Shannon and Shamika ignore the class completely, giggling as they text message each other.

Mrs. Thomas takes a deep breath and decides to forge ahead with the cooperative-learning activity. But, instead of discussing the lab questions with each group as she had planned, she finds herself refereeing heated outbursts for the next 50 min.

In its most basic form, education consists of a series of interactions between teacher and student, between groups of students, or between students and various school personnel (Cazden, 1986). Although high-quality education is often described as the presence of standards-based curriculum taught by a highly qualified teacher (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2001), the effectiveness of even the best classroom instruction hinges on students' ability to engage positively in personal interactions. Without those skills, students' opportunities to learn are greatly diminished (Malecki & Elliott, 2002; Wentzel, 1993). Far more than good manners, social

skills include a range of learning-related skills that allow students to study independently, work in groups, build and maintain friendships, and respond appropriately to adult feedback and correction (Gresham, Sugai, & Homer, 2001). For most children, the majority of socialization experiences occur in school, and the ability to engage in prosocial interactions plays a vital role in their student success--and yes, it can be taught.

Failure to meet social expectations early in their schooling puts children at risk for both academic failure (McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000) and peer rejection (Kauffman, 2005). Most but not all students acquire the skills necessary to meet classroom expectations without formal instruction (Skiba & Peterson, 2003). Students who struggle to master social skills need more than disciplinary consequences when they fail to engage in appropriate behavior. They need to be taught--directly and systematically--the skills needed to succeed in school (Martens & Witt, 2004; Warger & Rutherford, 1996). If Mrs. Thomas's students are to reach their full academic potential, they must be taught how to engage appropriately in the large-group, small-group, and independent-learning activities that they encounter in class. To do so, Mrs. Thomas will have to enlarge the scope of her teaching to include social skills instruction.

The Importance of Social Skills in Educational Reform

Social skills instruction is highly relevant to present-day practitioners and their students. Today, public school personnel face enormous pressure to boost students' achievement scores and to meet state content standards (NCLB, 2001). Although these standards primarily describe academic outcomes, embedded within them are numerous social or behavioral skills that are crucial to student achievement. Consider a standard that requires a first grader to write the alphabet. To meet that goal, the student must be able to hold a pencil, listen to a teacher describe the shapes of the letters, and remain seated long enough to practice and ultimately complete the task. Just as the inability to hold a pencil makes it difficult for a child to write the alphabet, the inability to participate socially and behaviorally in educational activities limits a student's access to instruction.

The pivotal role that social skills play in students' academic achievement is not limited to standards reform. Classroom teachers have long recognized the importance of social and behavioral skills, viewing cooperation, self-control, and other social skills as critical to achieving academic and behavioral success (Lane, Pierson, & Givner, 2003; Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006). Indeed, students who lack these skills are more likely to face a number of undesirable outcomes that include poor interactions with teachers and peers, diminished academic performance, and an increased number of disciplinary infractions (Gresham, 2002; Meier, DiPerna, & Oster, 2006).

The implications of students' social-interpersonal behavior are especially relevant to school personnel looking for ways to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. The misunderstandings that can stem from disparate cultural norms are well documented (see Cartledge & Loe, 2001; Cartledge et al., 2002; Gable, Hendrickson, Tonelson, & Van Acker, 2002). For example, although Anglo Americans value direct eye contact and view it as a sign of respect, members of other cultures may not (Davis, 1996; Gable et al., 2002). Accordingly, some teachers may mistakenly assume that a student's averted gaze signals a lack of respect. In other instances, negative peer pressure can undermine teacher expectations regarding student classroom conduct (Kauffman, 2005). A culturally responsive social skills curriculum can provide both teachers and students with the knowledge and skills with which to minimize these kinds of misunderstandings. Moreover, when practitioners offer instruction that is responsive to differing cultural norms, they promote a greater appreciation for and tolerance of individual differences while ensuring that students possess the skills necessary to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

Taken together, these considerations suggest that it is important for classroom teachers to infuse social skills training into daily academic instruction, thereby providing all students with an equal opportunity to learn academic and nonacademic skills. However, what do educators really know about social skills training? And, given the competing demands on instructional time, how can school personnel provide such training? In the remainder of this article, we explore these and other issues regarding social-interpersonal behavior.

Social Skills Intervention Research

Gresham, Van, and Cook (2006) defined social skills as a set of competencies that (a) promote positive social relationships, (b) contribute to peer acceptance and friendship development, (c) lead to satisfactory school adjustment, and (d) allow students to cope with and adapt to the demands of the social environment. There are a number of studies in which researchers have reported the positive effects of social skills training. In our review, we found that social skills training has been successfully applied in general education (Ashcroft, 2004; Denham, Hatfield, Smethurst, Tan, & Tribe, 2006), special education (Miller, Lane, & Wehby, 2005), and school-wide formats (Skiba & Peterson, 2003), with students from kindergarten to high school (Ang & Hughes, 2001; Lane, Menzies, Barton-Arwood, Doukas, & Munton, 2005; Vaughn et al., 2003).

Notwithstanding these positive outcomes, not all research has supported the efficacy of social skills instruction. Indeed, the lack of treatment effects in some studies and meta-analyses of social skills intervention (e.g., Kavale, Mathur, & Mostert, 2004; Mathur, Kavale, Quinn, Forness, & Rutherford, 1998) underscores the importance of choosing a form of social skills instruction that is empirically validated. Like any intervention, effective social skills training requires careful planning and consistent implementation. Instruction that does not target socially valid behavior--either by not correctly identifying the reasons why a student does not engage in a particular behavior (e.g., a child who continues to be late to class to avoid bullies in the hallway despite having been offered smiley stickers for arriving on time) or by doing a poor job of teaching social skills--will probably not make much difference (Gresham et al., 2001; Mathur & Rutherford, 1996). When we take into account the varying definitions and types of intervention used across research studies, the seemingly contradictory results are easier to understand. Differences in implementation aside, social skills instruction can have a powerful impact on student behavior.

A Framework for Teaching Social Skills

Social skills instruction typically occurs within the context of two complimentary instructional formats. The first format focuses on the individual student. The teacher pinpoints specific skill deficits and then takes an individual student or small group aside to provide instruction that is intended to remediate specific social skills deficits (e.g., Rutherford, Chipman, DiGangi, & Anderson, 1992). In the second approach, social skills instruction is aimed at the whole class and embedded in academic instruction. Rather than setting aside a special time or removing students from the classroom, teachers incorporate various social skills into daily academic instruction (Korinek & Popp, 1997). Regardless of the format, all social skills interventions are based on a common set of assumptions (Sugai & Lewis, 1996; Warger & Rutherford, 1996):

1. All students can learn social skills. Social skills are not inherent in the individual. Like any behavior, they can be taught.

2. Social skills instruction is most effective when individualized to the student's needs. Social skills deficits are as unique as the students themselves. Therefore, interventions must take into account the individual circumstances of each student.

3. Social skills, once learned, must be generalized. If students are to achieve the greatest benefit from their new social skills, they must be able to apply them to new situations. If a student learns to raise his hand in sixth grade English class, but continues to call out in all other classrooms, the benefits to him will be negligible.

Intervention With Individual Students

In its simplest and most traditional form, social skills instruction consists of selecting a student or group of students who exhibit skills deficits, carefully defining what they need to learn, and explicitly teaching the students those skills (Warger & Rutherford, 1993). In Figure 1, we enumerate the steps for teaching social skills.

Step 1: Select Target Students

Identify those students who exhibit significant deficits in social skills (Lane et al., 2005; Warger & Rutherford, 1993). Although you may already have an idea which students will benefit the most, we encourage you to take time to examine your students more closely. Observe how and with whom your students interact and how their behavior varies with regard to meeting classroom expectations. When appropriate, it can be useful to ask a colleague to sit in on several lessons and then share his or her observations.

Step 2: Determine Desirable Social Skills

Before beginning instruction, it is important to identify precisely which skills a student needs to master (Korinek & Popp, 1997; Lane et al., 2005). Examine the situations in which the student encounters problems and consider which aspects of that situation may be causing the difficulty. Does the student have a difficult time coping with mistakes, accepting criticism, managing anger or frustration, cooperating with classmates, sustaining concentration while working independently, or adhering to classroom norms such as sitting quietly or raising one's hand'? Table 1 lists common examples of social skills that are important to school success.

TABLE 1. Examples of Important School-Related Social Skills

Domain	Social skill
School expectations	Following directions; seeking attention appropriately (hand raising, waiting one's turn); maintaining academic and behavioral focus; saying please and thank you; completing work independently
Accepting negatives	Successfully coping with and recovering from mistakes; accepting the answer "no", taking responsibility for behavior; accepting the consequences of behavior
Interpersonal skills	Initiating conversations; inviting peers to study, play, or interact; turn taking during conversations; listening actively and empathically; acknowledging others' feelings; cooperating with peers; compromising in conflict situations; accepting compliments
Self-awareness or control	Coping with fear, anger, or frustration; controlling temper and impulsive actions; accurately describing one's own emotions and behavioral actions; rewarding oneself

When an educator defines social skills that he or she would like students to exhibit, it is important to take into account the varying cultural values, community norms, and parental expectations that affect student behavior (Kauffman, 2005). McConnell (1987) discussed the concept of social entrapment and the advantages of targeting group-individual skills according to the probability that they will be elicited and reinforced in the natural environment. The logic is straightforward: Emphasis should be on teaching skills that have the most enduring value for the students, not just in the classroom but also in the real world. Given the rapidly changing student demographics, school personnel may need to target skills that are more reflective of the social context and life experiences than those in traditional social skills programs.

More recently, experts have argued that the natural environment is not a place, but a series of daily events, activities, and expectations that vary from person to person--all of which relate to the selection of skills to be taught (Yell, Meadows, Drasgow, & Shriner, in press). As students come from increasingly diverse backgrounds and disparate life experiences, the skills supported in the natural environment will vary as well. Therefore, although Table 1 provides a general description of social skills that most authorities see as important to school success, each of these behaviors will be defined most appropriately on a student-by-student basis.

Step 3: Distinguish Between Can't and Won't

To intervene effectively, it is important to distinguish between students who cannot perform a given skill because they have failed to acquire it and those who have the ability to perform the skill but fail to do so (Gresham et al., 2001; Warger & Rutherford, 1996). Students who lack a particular skill must be taught the behavior, whereas students who choose not to engage in the behavior will need a reason to do so. Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) asserted that skill deficits may reflect the fact that the student has not correctly learned how to engage in the behavior or is unclear about when to use it, whereas performance deficits may be indicative of a lack of motivation or competing emotional factors.

Step 4: Instruct

Introduce the identified social skill to the students. Directly and systematically teach the skill to those who do not possess it and reinforce their efforts to appropriately engage in the behavior (Bos & Vaughn, 2006; Lane et al., 2005). You can introduce the skill by using a commercially available social skills curriculum such as those shown in Appendix A. There also are a number of multimedia programs available. The use of mediated instruction (e.g., simulations, software, videotapes) is particularly useful for instruction in affective and interactive skills and for student self-assessment (Canney & Byrne, 2006). Regardless of its source, a sound social skills program should do the following:

1. Teach students to identify alternative prosocial behaviors and strategies.

2. Provide students with models that demonstrate prosocial behaviors and strategies.

3. Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice the behavior.

4. Directly socially reinforce prosocial behaviors and strategies. Feedback should be specific, immediate, frequent, and positive and should vary from student to student.

5. Introduce concepts of self-control (self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-feedback; Carter & Sugai, 1989; Warger & Rutherford, 1996).

Last, Gresham et al. (2006) offered a compelling argument for substantially increasing the amount of time that educators devote to social skills instruction.

Infusing Social Skills Training Into Content Instruction: The ENGAGE Blueprint

Targeted social skills instruction is a good place to begin, and incorporating the intervention directly into content instruction has many advantages. Although providing social skills training to an individual or small group of students is a good starting point, directly incorporating the intervention into whole-class content instruction has many advantages. Not only is combining instruction time efficient, but also social skills learned in context are more likely to generalize to the settings where students need to use them (Gresham et al., 2001). Moreover, with more than 80% of students with disabilities receiving all or part of their education in inclusive classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), school personnel cannot assume that students with special needs will receive social skills instruction elsewhere. Instead, all teachers must look for effective ways to teach social skills to all students.

The ENGAGE blueprint (see Appendix B) draws on best-practice research for combining social skills training with daily academic instruction (see Blake, Wang, Cartledge, & Gardner, 2000; Bos & Vaughn, 2006; Cartledge, 2005; de la Cruz, Cage, & Lian, 2000; Forgan & Gonzalez-DeHass, 2004; Gable et al., 2002; Goldworthy, Barab, & Goldworthy, 2000; Gresham et al., 2001; Korinek & Popp, 1997; Lane et al., 2005; Martens & Witt, 2004; Meier et al., 2006; Peterson, 1992; Rock, 2004; Rutherford, Mathur, & Quinn, 1998; Sugai & Lewis, 1996; Warger & Rutherford, 1996). The term ENGAGE is a mnemonic device that captures the six basic steps of social skills intervention, although the blueprint itself allows practitioners to incorporate the basic elements of sound social skills training into an existing lesson-plan structure. To implement the ENGAGE blueprint, we encourage educators to implement the following steps.

Examine the Demands of Curriculum and Instruction

Most classrooms contain students who exhibit a range of academic knowledge and skills. Wide discrepancies between pupil performance level and the difficulty level of the curricular material can trigger problem behavior (Center, Deitz, & Kaufman, 1982; Warger & Rutherford, 1996). Students who face repeated frustration or failure are likely to act up simply to escape from what, to them, is a highly aversive situation (Gable et al., 2002); other students act up to save face when they are unable to do the work. For these reasons, it may be useful to focus on one content area or class period, such as science, reading, or math; carefully examine the lesson plan and associated materials; and compare the goodness of fit with regard to student academic skills. Then, use this information to resolve any potential content-specific obstacles within the unit or lesson (e.g., by using graphic organizers or scaffolding).

Various work sheets and measurement instruments can be useful in organizing and recording classroom observations in a meaningful way. One example is the Classroom Profile Diversity Form. Developed by Gable et al. (2002), it allows educators to record students' academic functioning levels across or within curricular areas.

Note Essential Social Skills

One way to determine which social skills to address is to consider what skills are most relevant in your classroom or school (Cartledge, 2005; Gable et al., 2002; Lane et al., 2005; Warger & Rutherford, 1996). Once the educator is familiar with the academic content of the lesson, he or she should identify the social skills that students will need to demonstrate to access, participate in, and complete the planned unit of instruction.

Summarize social skills training on three levels: (a) classwide interventions, (b) subgroup-targeted interventions, and (c) pupil-specific interventions. Begin by asking questions about the class as a whole: What will students need to do to actively participate in the whole-class, small-group, or individual learning activities? What specific social and behavioral skills will afford them the most success? Will they have to raise their hand to speak, share materials with peers, work quietly at their seats, or respect the rules or expectations of an unfamiliar setting, such as the library or assembly? There are several ways to prioritize skills for instruction. For example, which skills are essential to academic success? How many students are deficient in this area? Which skills will be easiest to teach? Which skills will generate some positive momentum for both the teacher and students?

Next, think about individual students. Consider which students are most likely to have difficulty in performing the social skills that you plan to teach. Use your own observations, along with archival records (e.g., office referrals, cumulative records, child study team reports, observational data, or interviews) to decide whether these students may need more intensive interventions in addition to those you can provide at the classroom level. Again, worksheets such as the Class Profile and Management Form (Gable et al., 2002) may be a useful part of the decision-making process.

If a number of students evidence major skill deficits, you may wish to seek additional support. For example, whereas the general education teacher incorporates classwide social skills interventions into the wider curriculum, the special education teacher, counselor, or school psychologist might provide more intensive

training with specific students or subgroups of students. A growing number of schools are adjusting the length of class time to afford an extra period for group-individualized instruction (e.g., reading, social skills, study skills). School officials are being more flexible in determining students' postsecondary needs and substituting social skills training for some elective courses. Last, it may be possible to establish an after-school program that focuses on social skills, or a student teacher or intern may be willing to conduct small-group social skills training as a personal project.

Go Forward and Teach

Using the same process described under the aforementioned Step 4 for interventions with individual students, choose or create social skills instructional materials for your entire class. Although published materials may be appropriate, be sure to examine the relevance of any prepackaged curriculum to your students and classroom (Cartledge, 2005) and adjust the content accordingly. See Appendix A for a list of resources that may help you to create a plan of intervention.

With the variety of materials currently available, you may wish to look for intervention components that are suited to your particular teaching style. Lane et al. (2005) offered a six-step procedure for designing, implementing, and evaluating formal social skills intervention with small groups of students. Other authors have described ways to integrate social skills with literature (Cartledge & Kiarie, 2001); to combine cooperative learning and direct instruction (Rutherford et al., 1998); and to use graphic organizers (Rock, 2004), computer games (Goldworthy et al., 2000), ancient board games such as Mancala (de la Cruz et al., 2000), or experiential learning activities (Forgan & Gonzalez-DeHass, 2004). In addition to teacher-led interventions, peers can serve as a valuable resource to teach and reinforce social skills (Blake et al., 2000, Quinn, Jannasch-Pennell, & Rutherford, 1995). Peer-mediated intervention is especially well suited to school settings. Verbal exchanges between students are a normal part of day-to-day social interactions. In addition, students express a preference for peer-controlled interventions rather than adult-controlled interventions, and, once trained, classmates serve as a discriminating stimulus (nonverbal signal) for classmates to respond more appropriately (e.g., Blake et al., 2000; Gable, Arllen, & Hendrickson, 1994).

Once you have analyzed your lesson, chosen the skills you wish to teach, and collected the materials to do so, implement the plan. Use small increments of time within the lesson--beginning, middle, and end--to infuse social skills instruction into the academic content. Clearly state your expectations, model desired social skills, and provide students opportunities for guided practice.

Actively Monitor

Once students demonstrate mastery of a particular skill, the educator's attention should shift to ensuring its continued use (Lane et al., 2005; Martens & Witt, 2004; Warger & Rutherford, 1996). Throughout a lesson, the teacher can scan, move about the room, and prompt students to engage in newly acquired skills. It is important to provide students with consistent positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior and negative consequences for inappropriate behavior. When possible, parent volunteers and other school staff can share in monitoring student behavior. Consider sharing your observations with the students themselves: Once a social skill has been established, many students can use self-monitoring techniques to take responsibility for tracking their own behavior. Doing so is important because one reason why social skills training has not worked well in the past is the absence of strategies designed to promote maintenance and generalization. Schools represent a unique social context (Van Acker, 2007) in which teachers can exert control over variables linked to positive student behavior. On a school- and classwide basis--across time, settings, people, stimuli, and reinforcers--successful students are able to engage in various social skills and adjust their behavior to varying circumstances. Teaching all students cognitive-behavioral strategies that include overt self-instruction (talk aloud), covert self-instruction (inner speech), self-monitoring, and reinforcement is a proven-effective way to promote the durability and retention of social skills (Van Acker). Last, homework assignments are another proven-effective way to promote maintenance and generalization of behavior.

Gauge Progress

To be able to judge whether an intervention is working, educators must keep an accurate record of student behavior (Cartledge, 2005; Lane et al., 2005). Use informal and formal assessment methods to measure target students and class progress in acquiring, maintaining, and generalizing social skills. Consider using formal rating instruments such as the Social Skills Rating System on selected students every 6-12 months, paired with everyday informal techniques such as placing tally marks on a piece of tape fastened to your wrist as a way to capture an objective measure of student performance. Looking for teacher-friendly ways to objectively measure student performance is time well spent. Such methods not only facilitate data collection but also allow you to make timely decisions regarding the effectiveness of a particular intervention.

Exchange Reflections

At the conclusion of the lesson, teachers can use class meetings, circle time, or another shared period to hold a debriefing on social skills expectations (Martens & Witt, 2004; Peterson, 1992). Emphasis should be on the importance of mutual respect, shared decision making, and fostering a positive and cooperative classroom climate. To encourage students' ongoing motivation, focus on goal-oriented skills. One way to further integrate academic and nonacademic instruction is to incorporate the academic lesson's central content-related ideas into class discussion.

Putting It All Together: Applying the ENGAGE Blueprint in Mrs. Thomas's Science Class

Although Mrs. Thomas has had some difficult days, she is determined to see all of her students succeed. With that goal in mind, she decides to try the ENGAGE blueprint with her first-period class. The following is a stepwise summary of those efforts.

Examine Demands of Curriculum and Instruction

During her usual planning time, Mrs. Thomas looks over the upcoming science unit and develops her lesson plans. Although the lab work itself is straightforward, she knows that several of the students in her sixth grade class do not read at grade level and may find it difficult to follow her written directions. Mrs. Thomas borrows tape recorders and headsets from one of the elementary reading centers and records the directions for the lab assignment. During actual lab work, she will place a recorder and headset at each table so that students are able to review the directions as often as they like without disturbing others in their group. If tape recorders were not available, Mrs. Thomas might make sure that there is at least one fluent reader in each assigned group or create an alternate version of the instructions. In addition to reading level, Mrs. Thomas notes that most of her plans require the students to work in cooperative groups of four to five students. She carefully divides the students into lab groups, making sure that all groups contain students with differing abilities and at least one member with leadership skills.

Note Essential Social Skills

In examining the structure of her cooperative groups, Mrs. Thomas recalls Raulito's harassment of other group members and Susan's hoarding of materials. She concludes that the skills that her students need most are self-control and the ability to compromise in conflict situations. Mrs. Thomas carefully selects several activity units on self-control and conflict resolution from a social skills curriculum the school purchased last year, examining them first to be certain they reflect the elements of a quality intervention. She sees the Makes Sense graphic organizer (Ellis & Rock, 2001) in one unit as an especially good match for her interactive teaching style. Although the activities will take a little time away from the core science material, she is hopeful that the difference it will make will permit greater academic benefits over time.

Go Forward and Teach

Mrs. Thomas stands at the door and greets her students as they enter the classroom, modeling respect and setting the stage for self-control and cooperation. Then, before beginning the lesson she introduces a social skills module that includes self-control tactics, opening with the Makes Sense organizer to help students to understand why it is important to demonstrate self-control during the lab activities. Then, she clearly states both

the academic and behavioral expectations for the class and shares a few important facts related to the biology lesson.

Actively Monitor

While the students are working, Mrs. Thomas circulates around the classroom to check for understanding, to encourage cooperation, and to provide instructive feedback to students. As she moves from group to group, she keeps an eye on the rest of the classroom, monitoring behavior, praising students from afar, and redirecting students when necessary. She enlists the services of a part-time parent volunteer to assist in monitoring student behavior. When Mr. James arrives to take Julia for her scheduled resource time, he mentions that he uses a kitchen timer set at 5-min intervals to signal his students to award themselves points on a self-monitoring goal card if they demonstrate expected levels of self-control and cooperation. Intrigued by the idea, Mrs. Thomas makes a mental note to discuss more fully with Mr. James the idea of goal cards at the next grade-level meeting.

Gauge Progress

As the period progresses, Mrs. Thomas jots down brief comments on class behavior on the back of her lesson plan. She notes that Artemius's group has completed most of the assignment, far more than in the past, and that she had intervened in Susan's group three times to blunt minor disagreements over the sharing of materials. As Mrs. Thomas continues this habit of note taking in upcoming lessons, these immediate reflections may reveal incremental changes across time that might otherwise escape notice. Furthermore, she may identify students who require more intensive social skills intervention or pinpoint possible skill areas for further classwide instruction. In the future, she might maintain a separate notebook in which to record classroom observations or find a practical way to incorporate these notes into her existing record-keeping system.

Exchange Reflections

A few minutes before the end of class, Mrs. Thomas asks for the attention of her students. First, she reviews the lab assignment and then poses three questions: What social skills did we use well today? What social skills did we not use well during the lab? What should our primary social skills goal be for the next class period? She uses Think-Pair-Share (Lymna, 1981), a common question-answer strategy, to give every student an opportunity to respond to each question, and wraps up the discussion as the bell begins to ring.

The Rest of Mrs. Thomas's Story

It has been a little more than a month since Mrs. Thomas first incorporated social skills into her science instruction. Both she and her students have come a long way. Artemius still struggles to remain on task, but he is participating more and, just as important, his group is coping more effectively with the distractions he causes. Raulito no longer teases other students and, although Susan still tends to dominate her group, she is becoming increasingly comfortable in assuming a supporting role. Improvements in overall classroom behavior have resulted in a calmer, more relaxed and positive learning environment that all the students are enjoying. Best of all, less time devoted to classroom discipline has meant more time for academic instruction and enough time to incorporate several evidence-based enrichment activities at the end of the unit.

Although there are still times that try Mrs. Thomas's patience, the overall classroom climate in her science lab has improved significantly. Students have evidenced not only academic growth but also social-interpersonal gains.

Discussion

Although Mrs. Thomas and her students are imaginary, the real-life situations from which they are drawn remind educators how important social skills are to being successful in school. Cuban's (cited in Walker et al., 1995) assertion that, in the 21st century, schools likely would be the place to deliver integrated social and academic instruction has proven to be very prophetic. When students are not part of classroom instruction, they run the risk of falling further behind, becoming victims of peer rejection, and ultimately being relegated to functioning in the academic and social shadows of schooling. For these students, success will depend on

teachers who are willing to find ways to actively engage them in classroom instruction. We created the ENGAGE blueprint to guide educators to ensure that all students achieve success--academically and socially.

APPENDIX A

Resources for Teaching Social Skills

DVD and VHS

McGinnis, E., & Goldstein, A. P. People skills: Doing 'era right!
Models skill streaming for students. Research Press. $95.

McGinnis, E., & Goldstein, A. P. The skillstreaming video or DVD.
Provides school staff with the appropriate training on how to effectively carry out skillstreaming. Research Press. $125.

Software

Baron-Cohen, S., Hill, J., & Golan, O. Mind reading: Tire interactive guide to emotions (K-12+).
An interactive encyclopedia of human emotion that allows students to view a variety of people expressing different emotions. University of Cambridge. $129.

Curriculum Guides

Rutherford, R. Teaching social skills: A practical instructional approach.
Designed to infuse easily into existing instructional routines. Includes practical advice and instructional strategies for teaching social skills. Exceptional Innovations. $71.

Kinney, J., & Kinney, T. Know the code at school package.
Instruction for 50 social behaviors. Materials include scripts, self-monitoring materials, CD-ROM, video, 60-rain DVD, objective- based benchmarks, and a 24-page guide. The Attainment Company. $129.

Knoff, H. M. The stop & think social skills program. (Grade Sets: Pre-K, 2-3, 4-5, & 6-8)
Helps students learn a variety of social skills through role-playing and other activities. Sopris West. $149.95 per set.

Walker, H. M., McConnell, S., Holmes, D., Todis, J. W., Walker, J., & Golden, N. Walker social skills curriculum: A curriculum for" children's effective peer and teacher skills (ACCEPTS).
Helps teachers instruct elementary students in basic social skills including classroom skills, making friends, getting along with others, and basic interactions. PRO-ED. $62.

Walker, H. M., Todis, B., Holmes, D., & Horton, G., Walker social skills curriculum: Adolescent curriculum for communication and effective social skills (ACCESS).
Designed for middle and high school students; helps teachers address social skills in the following areas: peer related, adult related, and self-related. PRO-ED. $67.

Elliott, S. N., & Gresham, F. M. Social skills intervention guide.
Includes 43 lessons for students in grades 3 through high school. Addresses skills related to cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. Provides information to help teacher's link intervention strategies with assessment. American Guidance Service/Pearson. $92.99

Stephens, T. M. Social skills in the classroom (2nd ed.).
Curriculum includes 136 social skills classified in four behavioral categories: environmental, interpersonal, self-related, and task related. Also, in each area, objectives and three recommended instructional strategies are offered. Psychological Assessment Resources. $70.

Crissey, P. Real world social skills curriculum.
This 250-page curriculum guide provides teachers with interactive instructional techniques that can be used with small or large groups to teach children skills to deal with everyday social situations they encounter in school. PCI Education. $69.95.

Hazel, S., Schumaker, J., Sherman, A., & Sheldon, J. ASSET." A social skills program for adolescents.
This set of eight video training modules teaches social skills that can improve students' everyday interactions with parents, teachers, peers, and others. PRO-ED. $795.00.

Fister-Mulkey, S., Conrad, D. A., & Kemp, K. Cool kids.

Curriculum guides are designed at two separate levels: Level 1 (K-3) and Level 2 (3-8). Activities are designed to be flexible and can be used with individual students, small groups, the whole class, or the entire student body. Content focuses on teaching, prompting, praising, and correcting students' social behavior. Sopris West. $74.49 for each level or $137.95 for Levels 1 and 2.

Kinney, J., & Kinney, T. Social standards at school.

Can be used to teach social skills to an entire class or individuals. Provides an objective with five guidelines, suggested scripts for the teacher to use, and a checklist to monitor students' progress. The Attainment Company. $39.

Goldstein, A. P. The prepare curriculum: Teaching prosocial competencies.

Includes manual and 93 supplemental exercises to teach socials such as problem solving, interpersonal skills, anger management, reasoning, stress management, and empathy. Research Press. $39.95.

McGinnis, E., & Goldstein, A. P. Skillstreaming. (Separate versions available for early childhood, the elementary school child, and adolescents)

Early childhood materials are designed to teach beginning prosocial skills. The elementary version is aimed at improving students' social skills in areas such as classroom survival and friendship. The adolescent version targets 50 social skills dealing with feelings, alternatives to aggression, and coping with stress. In general, the skillstreaming approach uses modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and transfer (homework) strategies. Materials include manual, student booklets, skill cards, and program forms that can be purchased separately or in sets, Research Press. $70.95 for the adolescent set, $59.30 for the early childhood set, and $70.95 for the elementary set.

APPENDIX B

What to Consider and Avoid in the Implementation of Social Skills Training

ENGAGE heading	Consider
E: Examine the demands of curriculum and instruction	Consider ways to periodically remind yourself of the importance of teaching social skills. Remember, social skills are essential life skills. Educators' job is to help students not only master academic content but also become capable, caring, and contributing members of society. Talking with other teachers about their implementation of social skills or mentoring a newer educator are two ways to keep your enthusiasm high.
N: Note essential social skills	Consider initial and ongoing time demands. Early on, the time and energy needed to compare the demands of the curriculum with your students' strengths and needs may seem overwhelming. However, taking the time to prioritize the social skills that students need to master will pay off in the long run.
G: Go forward and teach	Consider ways you can be consistent. Rather than trying to find large blocks of time to teach social skills in isolation, use a little time within each lesson to touch on social skills every day. This approach will not only be easier to integrate but also will yield greater academic and behavioral gains.

A: Actively monitor	Consider dividing monitoring responsibilities between yourself and the students. As responsible adults, teachers maintain ultimate control and authority in the classroom. However, students can become more intrinsically motivated when they have opportunities to set their own goals and measure their performance toward achieving them. Social skills are no exception.
G: Gauge progress	Consider which students may benefit from more intensive social skills intervention. Many students respond well to a classwide approach, but for others it simply is not enough. Be familiar with resources that can offer more intensive social skills intervention, such as small-group or individualized instruction. Continuous assessment of students' skills will help you decide who needs what with greater objectivity and precision.
E: Exchange reflections	Consider how best to facilitate classwide discussions. Be sure to help students understand this is not a time to blame or point fingers. Rather, focus the discussion on helping students identify the social skills the class performed well and those they need to continue to develop. Planning a series of questions to guide the discussion can be effective.

ENGAGE heading	Avoid
E: Examine the demands of curriculum and instruction	Avoid using lack of time as a reason not to address social skills needs. Although it may feel as if you do not have time to include more things to teach, social skills are not just another content area to fit into your schedule. Rather, your students' social skills make the rest of your schedule possible.
N: Note essential social skills	Avoid pulling a packaged curriculum off the shelf and teaching it in its entirety. Instead, select lessons that address specific social skills deficits and infuse them into daily academic instruction.
G: Go forward and teach	Avoid expecting miracles. Incorporating social skills into daily academic instruction will help eliminate many behavioral problems you may face, but it will not solve every classroom behavioral challenge.
A: Actively monitor	Avoid trying to do it all yourself. Enlist the help of your colleagues, parents, and other

	volunteers to circulate and monitor students' performance during class. To ensure that students receive consistent feedback, however, be sure all your observers have the same expectations.
G: Gauge progress	Avoid relying on one standardized assessment to measure students' social skills. No one assessment can fully represent the varying needs of a diverse group of students. Use a variety of informal and formal measures to gather the most accurate reflection of your students' strengths and needs.
E: Exchange reflections	Avoid using reflection time as an opportunity to preach. Instead, use a few minutes at the end of the instructional period to review classwide goals for competently using social skills. Take care to end the discussion on a positive note.

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